

423 posed of eventually by distribution among the landless and
 425 the small landowners (those having not more than 12 acres).⁹

• [671] This decree was legalized by the Preliminary Land Reform Law of August 18, 1920, and its scope was broadened to permit the republic of Lithuania to assume also the ownership of private forests that were larger than 25 *desimtines* [804] (one *desimtine* is equal to about 2.7 acres).¹⁰ This law was a tentative one in that it contained no provision for the distribution of the expropriated property.

671 The Land Reform Law in its final draft, consisting of
 423 twelve sections and subdivided into seventy-seven paragraphs, was ratified in 1922.¹¹ The first section outlines the composition of the lands reserved for distribution, defining particularly the land to be taken into the distribution reserve. This action also enabled the state to take over the private property of those who had served in the post-war German armed bands of Bermont and Virgolicz and of those who had worked or were still working against the independence of Lithuania. Estates exceeding 200 acres and owned by one person or one family were also to be taken for land reform purposes.¹² Later the limit was raised to 321 acres (150 hectares). The second section of the Land Reform Law provides that the biggest and least active estates shall be among the first to be appropriated for land reform purposes. The third section defines the types of prospective recipients of the reapportioned land parcels. It states mainly that heads of families of landless peasants, farm laborers, and small landowners are entitled to share in the land distribution. Those farmers, or their lawful successors, from whom land was

⁹ Elsbergas, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁰ Vyriausybės Žinios, Nr. 45 eil. 454 (Government Gazette No. 45, Part 454). Hereafter referred to as V.Z.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Nr. 83 eil. 721.

¹² *Ibid.*, Nr. 324 eil. 2218.

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seized by the government in 1861 and 1863 are to receive 671 ● priority over all others. Each head of a family may receive not 423 more than 49.4 acres (20 hectares). Land is also to be distributed to public schools, schools of agriculture, and other in- [657] stitutions of learning and culture as well as to hospitals, sanatoriums, asylums, and other social and public organizations.

The land is divided into four classes, graded according to 423 the fertility of the soil. The new owners have to pay equal annual installments for their land for thirty-six years. The rate to be paid varies from 180 to 252 litas per hectare (2.471 acres) for first-class land, depending on its location; 90 to 126 litas for second-class; 36 to 54 litas for third-class, and 18 to 27 litas for fourth-class. No interest accumulates on the unpaid balance except on due shares which are not paid in the time prescribed.¹³

The only recipients of land exempted from all payments [729] are volunteer soldiers in the Lithuanian war for independence and their families.

Former owners of the lands taken for land reform pur- 423 poses were entitled to compensation. Payment was to be 425 made with government bonds bearing three percent interest 652 and redeemable at any time not later than thirty-six years from the date of issue. Paragraph 58 of the Land Reform Law prescribes that the compensation for the land shall be a fair price based on valuations existing in the period between 1910 and 1914. As the Land Reform Law was passed on April 3, 1922, when *Obost* marks¹⁴ were in circulation, the compensation was to be paid in this currency. (One Russian ruble was made equal to two *Obost* marks.) Paragraph 59 provides that the highest amount paid may not exceed

¹³ Salkauskas, *op. cit.*, pp. 325-32.

¹⁴ See, p. 102 below, section on Finance.

First Law

- 671 The first law on elementary education was
 872 passed in 1922 making the Lithuanian primary
 875 school of four grades and requiring all children
 of both sexes between the ages of 7 and 13 to
 attend it. The general administrative organi-
 zation was based on the principle of decentrali-
 zation which granted wide powers to the local
 authorities and to the children's parents.
 However, this experience soon showed that
 [647] under such a system the qualifications of the
 teachers left much to be desired. For this
 reason the law of 1922 was amended in 1925
 and the appointment of teachers, their trans-
 fer from one school to another, and certain
 other matters were centered in the Ministry
 of Education. In the same year the school
 curricula were drawn up and officially ap-
 proved. The schools were run under this law
 up to 1936 when a new elementary school law
 [156] was promulgated which declares that the pur-
 pose of the elementary school is to provide
 primary education for the youth of Lithuania,
 foster their spiritual and physical growth, and
 teach them to love, cherish, and sacrifice
 themselves for Lithuania.
- 872 The present elementary school has six
 grades. The first four, obligatory for children
 between 7 and 13, form the first degree of
 study. The last two, for children 14 and 15
 years old, form the second degree which is
 optional as yet because not enough schools
 are available. The increase in them began
 only in 1933. The elementary school sub-
 jects of instruction are: Religion taught by
 clergymen of the various denominations and
 compulsory for all children, Lithuanian as
 the language of instruction, arithmetic, knowl-
 edge of environment, history, geography,
 872 natural history, art, manual arts, music and
 186 singing, and physical training. In an ele-
 191 mentary school district where the number of
 children of non-Lithuanian parentage exceeds

497 Railroad traffic is lively: military trains pass Kaunas every few minutes. A single passenger train circulates daily between Vilnius and Kaunas, and one train operates every other day between Kaunas and Šeikotai.

499 Graveled highways go unrepaired, showing ever
505 greater deterioration. Few ships and barges are seen on the Nemunas, as most of the fleet managed to escape to Denmark in 1944.

465 All artisans were driven into "artels": excessive taxes
511 did the trick.

[435] Wages are low and working hours are long. Prices are twice as high as in Moscow: one week's wages is spent on a kilogram of butter. In 1945 butter was transported from Lithuania to Moscow in an "airlift operation," by planes. The Muscovites liked Lithuanian butter—and butter is still exported, depriving the Lithuanians of their diet. Numerous deductions are withheld from wages—up to one half, including "voluntary" subscriptions to state loans, etc.

In consequence of the meager pay, every worker attempts to steal whatever he can, and to sell the stolen products in the black market. Lately the bureaucracy—itsself most guilty of embezzlement—began penalizing the workers with harsh penalties. Nevertheless, the practice of stealing is universal, and the Russian officials set the pace. Whenever the so-called "exemplary state farms" call for volunteers to assist in planting or harvesting—there are enough volunteers who anticipate a chance to "hook something."

The morale of factory workers is as low as that of the farmers. The living conditions steadily deteriorate. Discontent over "stakhanovite efficiency," long working hours, low pay, lack of clothing, etc. is widespread. In the early part of 1948 the regime abandoned its choicest proffer to workers—the bait of appointment to managing posts. Today, there is a tendency to build up cadres of skilled specialists, a privileged caste of people in uniform—even telegraph post climbers wear uniforms.

[554]

Moral Situation

000 Symbols of Russian "culture" and ways of life universally exhibited by the "masters and victors" are—violence, profanity, drunkenness, thievery, deceit and raggedness.

685 Any criminal tendencies among the natives were drastically curbed by the underground authorities. Felonies were penalized by death sentences—and the sentences were carried out. But thieving is uncontrollable in the factories and in the supply services.

273 The Russians and their bootlickers revel in continual drunkenness. Vodka is the universal form of
186 bribe. Unfortunately, the brutal conditions of life affected the Lithuanians to a certain degree, too. People are tempted to forget bitter reality for a half hour at least. The resistance movement continually wages a press propaganda against alcoholism ("Don't be like a Russian!"). For strictly practical considerations of maintaining a supply service for its armed units, the resistance movement repeatedly issued orders banning home distilling and any waste of the much needed grains. The Russians, however, pursue a definite policy aimed at demoralizing the natives and weakening their moral standards. Vodka is dumped on the market in unlimited unrationed quantities. But—the Church is still permitted to preach against the evils of drunkenness.